

COBBETT'S WEEKLY POLITICAL PAMPHLET.

225] LONDON, SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 1817. [226

NOTICE.

All the *back Numbers*, from No. 15 of Vol. 31 to the present time, are ready for delivery. The former part of Vol. 31 is also reprinted, and, on any day after the 28th instant, that part may be had separately. It comprises the time from the first of July to the 12th of October; and this former part, with the separate Numbers, from 15 to 26, make up Volume 31 complete, with a table of Contents, Title Page and all.—The price of the former part is 2s. retail, and 1s. 6d. to the trade.—The *whole Volume* may also be had, bound in boards, price 4s. retail, and 3s. to the trade.---These Parts, or Whole Volumes, will be supplied in the same manner as the Weekly Pamphlet is supplied. The first number of "*Paper again Gold*" is published this week; and the work will be complete and ready for delivery to those persons who want the Book, in one fortnight from this time.

A LETTER

TO

EARL GROSVENOR.

Thanks for his Lordship's defence of the People.—Fair Play's a jewel.—The Question of Reform fairly argued.—Annual Parliaments.—Universal Suffrage.—Mr. Brougham's Sincerity.—Foul conduct of the Corrupt Writers.—Green Bag and Cheap Publications.

London, Feb. 19, 1817.

MY LORD,

Your Lordship's speech, as given in the newspapers of last week, has given great satisfaction to every candid man in the country, and to no man more than to him who has now the honour of addressing you. If people are in error, it is not by misrepresentations and revilings and abuse that they are to be convinced of their errors. This desirable end is not to be arrived at by imputing to the leaders seditious designs, and to the people the grossest of ignorance. This is not the way to silence the former, nor to gain over the latter. If we, who hold for annual Parliaments and Universal

Suffrage, be in error, your Lordship has taken the right course to make us patient, at least, and to wait to hear what can be urged in opposition to our opinions. The flippancy and rancour and affected contempt, with which we have been assailed by corrupt and scrambling men, have only tended to excite our just resentment against them, and, which is worse, to make us confound with those corrupt scramblers, all other persons, who appear to be co-operating with them in general.

The course, which your Lordship has pursued, is precisely the opposite of that of the persons here alluded to. The mildness of your language, the justice of your sentiments, the whole tenor of your manly declarations call upon us to listen to you with the greatest respect, and, if we still retain our opinions, to show by fair statement and reasoning that the grounds of those opinions are such as to warrant us in differing, as to those opinions, from those which your Lordship has so explicitly and fairly expressed.

You have been, in your reported speech, pleased to observe, my Lord, that a Reform of Parliament of *some sort* is necessary and just; and, that you consider the *seven years Parliaments* "as a direct infringement of the Constitution, as a violation of the rights and liberties of the people, and that the Act, sanctioning those parliaments, ought not to remain in the Statute Book;" and, your Lordship is pleased to add, that you would give your support to a Bill for triennial Parliaments; but, as to annual Parliaments, you do not think them agreeable to the Constitution; and that, as to Universal Suffrage, you cannot help calling it *universal impracticability*. But, though you differ with us in opinion upon these points,

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your Lordship's words, which I cannot help repeating here, convince us, that, while you would leave our minds free, you have a mind of your own, open to receive whatever we have to urge in defence of our opinions. "But because he differed with others on that subject, was he therefore (as was well expressed by a Noble Person on a former evening, in a most eloquent and convincing speech) *to wish to see those with whom he differed, imprisoned and gibbeted, hung, drawn and quartered?* Was he to wish to see a Judge Jeffries, or one acting in the spirit and power of a Judge Jeffries, placed on the Bench, for the purpose of committing a legal murder on these people? For instance, should he wish to see MAJOR CARTWRIGHT, whom he understood to be a most respectable person, because he entertained such contrary sentiments, and endeavoured to propagate them through the country, should he wish to see his mouth closed, not by argument and fair discussion, but by the bloody hands of an executioner?—The thought was shocking, monstrous, and diabolical! As the fortitude of the people had been great under their difficulties and privations, and sufferings, so had their conduct in all places, where meetings for retrenchment and reform had been held, been most exemplary; and, indeed it was remarkable and even surprising that it should have been so, considering the great numbers that have been assembled in various places, and the warmth that naturally arises in large bodies when assembled from various quarters to discuss matters, where grievances are felt. This was at least no symptom of disaffection, and he trusted, from such patient discussion, much good would arise."

My Lord, these words will endear your name to the people of this kingdom; for, it is nothing short of the whole people, in the proper sense of the word, of whose conduct your Lordship has here spoken; and, I

venture to assure your Lordship, that the satisfaction, which the people will derive from your just description and your high commendation of their own conduct, will still fall short of their gratitude to your Lordship for the manner, in which you have been pleased to speak of that venerable patriot, that learned, able, wise, disinterested, brave, unconquerable, true-hearted Englishman, MAJOR CARTWRIGHT, whose private life has been as amiable and as spotless as his public exertions have been long, arduous, and valuable. It is indeed "monstrous and diabolical" to think of answering such a man by the hands of an executioner, and scarcely less monstrous, or less diabolical, to think of answering him by shutting his mouth by force of any sort, or to think of answering any body else by similar means. The folly, too, is equal to the wickedness of such attempts; for, is it possible to suppose, that, if the people have been induced to believe any thing, no matter what, they will be induced to unbelieve it by the use of force to compel their teachers to hold their tongues? or to lay down their pens? No, my Lord, there is something so unfair, so unjust, so tyrannical and so insolent in all propositions tending to encourage such attempts, that the very tames drop of blood in the very tames of hearts is roused into resentment at the very idea.

In your Lordship we have a fair, an open, a manly, a truly noble adversary, not of us, but of some of our doctrines; and, therefore, my Lord, I shall proceed, with great respect, to state to you the reasons on which I conceive those doctrines to be well founded; and this I shall do much less with a desire to triumph in the dispute, than with the hope of contributing some little matter towards gaining over to our side a person of such great weight and such high character as your Lordship.

In so manfully and truly stating, that seven year parliaments are "a direct-infringement of the Consti-

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"*titation and a violation of the rights and liberties of the people,*" you have spared us the trouble of contending, that we have a *right to a Reform of some sort*. Nor is this a small matter, seeing, that, for years past, *all reform has been in another quarter, asserted to be wholly unnecessary, and that the whole thing, as it now stands, is agreeable to the Constitution.*

Seeing, then, that the thing, as it now stands, is, "a direct infringement of the Constitution and a violation of the rights and liberties of the people," we come naturally to consider what sort of a Reform would reinstate the people in the possession of those rights and liberties, of which possession they are now deprived? We say *Annual Parliaments and Universal Suffrage*; your Lordship thinks that the former are *not agreeable to the Constitution*, and that the latter is *impracticable*. These are the two points, which, with great respect and submission, I propose to argue with your Lordship; and, not to argue them upon mere precedent or ancient usage, but also upon the ground of equity, and of the fitness of the things, considered in their natural effects under the circumstances of the nation in these times in which we live.

That parliaments *annually chosen* were the ancient law of the land is, I think, evident from the very words of the Statute of the 4th year of Edward III. Chapter 14, passed in the year 1331; for though the word *holden* once a year is made use of, it is, nevertheless, clearly proved by Mr. Granville Sharp, in his "*Declaration of the People's rights,*" and which was published in 1775, that parliaments were *newly chosen* every time that they were called. He has there cited several instances of new parliaments being summoned *year after year successively by a new writ of election*; he mentions some years in which *two, or more, new parliaments* had been summoned *by different writs of election*, in the space of a single year. And, that learned and venerable law-

yer and excellent man, Mr. BARON MASERES, in speaking upon this subject, says: "so that it may truly be affirmed, that, in those ancient times, the people enjoyed the privilege of *electing new representatives in parliament, either once in every year, or more than once, if the king found it necessary to have another parliament before the end of the year.*"

These remarks of Mr. BARON MASERES are to be found in a new quarto edition, published a few years ago by White in Fleet Street, of GENERAL LUDLOW's famous Letters in defence of the Long parliament in their conduct against Charles the First, in which Letters also LUDLOW insists upon the people's rights to "*annual parliaments.*"

Now, my Lord, were LUDLOW and GRANVILLE SHARP, and is Mr BARON MASERES; are these to be looked upon as "*wild and visionary men?*" Are they, too, to be considered as "*de-signing and evil-minded persons?*" Or, are they to be numbered amongst the "*deluded*" and the "*seduced?*" Where will Mr. Peiry and Mr. Brougham be pleased to station Mr. Baron Maseres? will they place him upon the list of the "*Knaves*" or upon that of the "*Fools*" of the day.

However, my Lord, I am ready to acknowledge, that, though the ancient laws and usages of the land are decidedly for annual parliaments, such parliaments ought not to be contended for, if it can be shown, that the restoration of them would now be *unfit*; that it would be productive, or tend towards, any mischief to the nation, or to any of the great and settled laws and establishments of the land; and especially if it were at all likely to introduce that strife, confusion, and anarchy, of which our virulent opponents affect to be so much afraid. But, my Lord, *why* should annual elections lead to such consequences? It is the opinion of Mr. BARON MASERES, that annual parliaments would have a precisely opposite tendency and effect. "Now," observes that truly learned man, "if this good old

"law were to be revived, would there
 "be any danger of such violent and
 "expensive and often ruinous con-
 "tests, at the time of Elections, as
 "are seen in the present mode of pro-
 "ceeding, when the general Elections
 "occur only once in about six years?
 "For, as the representatives would
 "be *constantly disposed to cultivate*
 "*the good opinion of their Consti-*
 "*tutents*, and, by their conduct in
 "Parliament, to promote their in-
 "terests and wishes, as far as their own
 "consciencés and judgments would
 "allow them; in order to be re-elect-
 "ed by them in the next year, it is
 "probable that there would be much
 "fewer contested Elections, and chan-
 "ges of the Representatives, than
 "there are at present. And from *the*
 "*harmony* that would generally sub-
 "sist, between the members of Par-
 "liament and their Electors, the *Dig-*
 "*nity and Respectability of the House*
 "*of Commons* would be increased, and
 "the confidence of the people, in the
 "wisdom and uprightness of their
 "measures *would be restored*; and
 "the resolutions that would be taken
 "by them would be generally allowed
 "to be in reality, what they are now
 "*often called and pretended to be*, the
 "true expressions, or declarations,
 "*of the sense of the people at large*, on
 "the subjects to which they relate.
 "It seems probable, therefore, that
 "the revival of this good old law,
 "*for choosing new Parliaments every*
 "*year, would be attended with very*
 "*happy consequences, and give gene-*
 "*ral satisfaction to the nation.*"

I think your Lordship will agree
 with me, that these are the reflections
 of a sober-minded friend of his coun-
 try; and, indeed, my Lord, the truth
 of them appears to me to be so ob-
 vious, that I cannot help thinking,
 that it must strike every one who
 reads with impartiality. Was it ever
 known that the *shortening of the du-*
 "*ration of any obligation to obedience*
 "tended to discontent, restiveness and
 "violence on the side of the *bounden*
 "*party*? Men who have the power of
 "choosing new masters *wickly*, are

much less disposed to serious discon-
 tents than those who can choose them
 only yearly, and those who can choose
 them *yearly*, require a much less ri-
 gorous law to bind them than is re-
 quired to bind those who are held to
 their masters for *seven years*, though
 there is in this case a sort of prize at
 the end of the term of obedience.—
 Your Lordship has seen how readily
 soldiers have enlisted for a *limited*
 "*time*, and how backward they have
 "been to give up their right of choice
 "*for life*. In short, it is notorious,
 that men submit for a *short time*,
 peaceably and quietly, and even cheer-
 fully, to that which they would die
 rather than submit to, if the period of
 submission were known to be of long
 duration, and the mere chance of red-
 dress removed to a distant day.—
 "*Never mind! It is only for a few*
 "*months!*" Is not this the language
 of all mankind? Is not this the lan-
 guage of every human being, who is
 aggrieved, or who thinks himself ag-
 grieved, and who knows that the day
 of redress, or of his seeking redress,
 is at hand? Is not this the effect, the
invariable effect, of a short duration
 of every kind of obligation to sub-
 mission or obedience? How often has
 every gentleman, every employer of
 every description, every occupier,
 every landlord, every guest at an inn,
 said "No matter! It is *not worth*
 "*while to quarrel*. I shall be rid of
 "the connection by *such a time*, and
 "I will take care to avoid the same in
 "future." How often, how many
 scores of times, has every man, be he
 who or what he may, said this during
 his life-time!

Why, then, should it be supposed,
 that this tranquillizing effect would
 not be produced by annual parlia-
 ments? Why should it be supposed,
 that the very cause of content and
 tranquillity in *all other cases* should
 be the cause of discontent and uproar
 and confusion in this particular case?
 Why should it be supposed, that the
 laws of nature herself would become
 perverted and produce their opposite
 in the breasts of Englishmen? I will

not insult your Lordship by appearing to believe, that you will adopt, much less act upon, any such supposition.

If there are people to suppose, that the House of Commons would, by annual elections, be so *varying* for ever in its members, that the laws would be *continually changing*, I beg your Lordship, besides the weight of the observation of Mr. BARON MASERES, to remember the old maxim, that "*short reckonings make long friends*," than which a truer maxim never dropped from the lips of wisdom; and the experience of all mankind shews, that those quarrel least who have the most frequent power of adjusting their affairs. The Legislative Assembly of Pennsylvania, for instance, is elected by new writs annually; and, I venture to assure your Lordship, that new faces and changes of laws are much less frequent there than in the House of Commons in England. The government of Pennsylvania is no very *new* thing. It is as it was originally formed by the famous Englishman, whose name the State bears. He carried to those deserts the *laws of England*. He built his government upon those laws, while the Stuarts were trampling them under foot at home. He knew that annual parliaments were the law of the land. He planted them in his new domain; there they have lived and flourished, and under them a system of sway, which has produced a scene of social tranquillity and happiness such as is to be found in no other part of the world. Because I refer to this instance in support of my argument, I am not to be supposed to desire *other* changes here after the model of Pennsylvania; but, as far as the instance goes, it is, I presume, entitled to all the weight to which any case in point can be entitled.

As I am not aware of any objection save those that I have here noticed, against annual parliaments, I shall now proceed to the *second point*, mentioned in your Lordship's speech, namely, *Universal Suffrage*. And, here, suffer me to take the liberty to refer your Lordship to the *Hampshire*

Petition, which not only prays for suffrage to this extent, but which also briefly states the grounds on which the prayer is founded, and points out the futility, as the petitioners deem it, of the objection with regard to its *impracticability*.

It is, my Lord, a well-known maxim of the Constitution, that no man shall be *taxed without his own consent*. Every man is now *taxed*; therefore, if he has no voice in choosing those who make the tax-laws, he *must be taxed without his own consent*. But, this is not *all* that the law of the land says in support of our claim. The laws of England have always held, that every man not a *bondman* (and there are no bondmen now) ought to have a *voice in making, or assenting to*, the laws, either by himself or his representative in parliament. Sir THOMAS SMITH, who, as your Lordship need not be told, was a great lawyer and a Privy Councillor in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, in a work called "*The Commonwealth of England*," has this passage: "*Every Englishman is intended to be present in parliament, either in person, or by procuration and attorney, of what pre-eminence, state, or quality so ever he may be, from the prince to the lowest person in England, and the consent of parliament is taken to be every man's consent*." This old lawyer, though he was a Privy Councillor to a Queen who had very high notions of her prerogatives, still called England a "*Commonwealth*," and talked not of *Monarchy* and *Legitimacy*, which words are become so fashionable now-a-days!

The *Book of the Assizes*, which, as your Lordship knows, is a book of great authority, says, that "*Laws, to bind all, must be assented to by all*." And how are *all* to assent to laws, if only a part, and that, too, a very small part, have a voice in choosing those who have power to make the laws.

FORTESQUE, who wrote in the reign of Henry the Sixth, always talks of the Parliament as the representatives of *the whole kingdom, the whole realm*,

and the like; and never seems to suppose, that *any man* is excluded from voting.

BLACKSTONE, who was a *court-lawyer*, and in modern times too, could not blink this great principle without over-setting the whole of his commentary. He says, in Book I. chap. 2. "*Every man* is, in judgment of law, *party* to making an act of parliament, being *present thereat* by his representatives." But, the grand principle, which is the clench of all that any one has ever written on the subject, is in Book IV. chap. 1. "The *lawfulness* of punishing criminals is founded upon this principle, that the *law by which they suffer* was made by *their own consent*."

Now, my Lord, what *can* be urged in answer to this? How is it possible to explain away the meaning of these plain words? How is it possible to root out of men's minds principles like these, if once implanted there? And, is it just, my Lord, to call our principles *novel*, *wild*, and *visionary*, and to accuse us of a wish to throw the country into confusion, because we inculcate these same principles? Are we "*designing and evil-minded men*?" are we *deluders* "and *seducers*?" are the Reformers what an impudent man has called them, "*knaves or fools*," because they have presumed to attach to plain and definitive words a plain and definitive meaning?

But, it is not the *law* of the proposition for *Universal Suffrage*, which your Lordship appears to dispute; it is the *practicability* of the thing; and, it would be unreasonable as well as rude in me to treat this objection of your Lordship lightly, seeing that I had such doubts of the *practicability* of it as to induce me, at a late meeting of Deputies in London, where Major Cartwright presided, to make a motion, proposing to stop at *householders*, and not to go so far as to embrace *every man of twenty-one years of age*, that being, as your Lordship knows, what is meant by the shorter phrase, "*Universal Suffrage*."

Upon the occasion here referred to, I stated all the difficulties, which, after long reflection, had occurred to my mind. I did not see how men who had no settled and visible dwelling in the safety of which they were interested, and which must be well known, could be polled with accuracy at an election, especially in populous places. I did not see how large crowds of men could be prevented from marching from one parish to another, and thereby voting twice or thrice in the same day, and for five or six different members. In short, I was lost in the mist of confusion which this scene presented to my mind, and I, therefore, proposed to stop at *householders*, really seeing in the other proposition, that "*universal impracticability*," which your Lordship appears to perceive.

Some persons in the Meeting agreed with me, but the majority were clearly on the other side, though my objections had, as I thought, not been removed. At last a very sensible and modest man, whose name I am sorry I have forgotten, and who came from *Middleton* in Lancashire, got up and gave an answer to my objections, in somewhat these words: "Sir, I cannot see all, or any, of the difficulties, which Mr. Cobbett believes to exist in the way of taking an election upon the principle of *Universal Suffrage*. I have seen with how much exactness the lists of all male inhabitants, in every parish, *inmates* as well as *householders*, have been made out under the *militia laws*, and I see no reason why regulations, which have been put in force universally for calling us forth to bear arms in defence of the country and of the estates and property of the country, should not be put in force again, and by the very same officers, for calling us forth to exercise our right of suffrage at elections."

This was enough for me. The thing had never struck me before. And, my Lord, what *difficulty* can there be in making out the lists of all men of twenty-one years of age, in every pa-

rish every year, two or three months before the day of election, and of having those lists ready to check the poll on the day of that election? It would be simply the *names* and the *age* that would be to be ascertained. Whereas in the case of the *militia laws*, there are, besides these two facts, the circumstances of marriage, of number of children, of parochial settlement, of previous service, of substitution, of pecuniary means, of height, of bodily ability, and other circumstances, all to be enquired into and ascertained. Yet all these are ascertained under the militia laws, and they become the foundation of proceedings affecting the personal liberty of every man, above eighteen and under fifty years of age. And, if all this could be done, and done so effectually too, shall it be pretended, that correct lists cannot be made out in each parish of *all the names of all the male inhabitants*, living in the parish on any given day? It would be even *easier* to do this than to take an election by *householders*; because, it would, in populous places, be very difficult to ascertain, who *were* and who *were not* householders. The man who really *rented* a house might not be the man who lived in it. Two or three, or more, families might live in the same house. The *fact* of residence would be accompanied with numerous others all of a doubtful or questionable character in many instances; and, then, it never could be endured, that a pauper householder should have a vote, while the independent single lodger should have none. Houses might be let for a month or a quarter. In short, the difficulties would be far greater than in the other case, the mode of ascertaining all the facts of which are so easily ascertained, being liable to no exception, except the single one of *under age*.

And, my Lord, what is so easy as to *take* an election with all the names of the voters ready prepared, and arranged in alphabetical order, and posted up beforehand at the Church doors? There could arise no disputes at the hustings. There could be no

contests about good votes or bad votes. There would be nobody bribed, because no purse would suffice for the purpose. There would be none of those scenes of wickedness which now disgrace elections. The time of the members and of the House would not be wasted in the deciding on election contests. All would be fair, regular, and effectual, and the laws could not fail to be held in veneration, when every man should feel that he himself had had a voice in making them.

The *equity* of extending the suffrage to every grown-up man is, I think, equally clear. Every man *pays taxes*. I take the calculation of Mr. PRESTON, because I would avoid the charge of exaggeration. He states, in his pamphlet, that every labourer, who earns 18*l.* a year, pays 10*l.* of it in taxes. It is very certain, that every man pays a large portion of his wages away in taxes; and, as I never have heard it pretended, that the ancient law of the land did not make suffrage go hand in hand with taxation, it appears to me impossible to deny, that every man has, agreeably to that principle, a right to vote for Members of Parliament.

And, then, my Lord, there is the *military duty*. Every man able to bear arms, has been made liable to serve as a *soldier*; to submit to martial law; to submit to military discipline; to leave his home, his parents, his wife, and, in some cases, his children; to quit his trade or calling; and, if it were necessary, to *risk his life*. These are not slight sacrifices, my Lord, and you well know to what an extent they have been made by the people of England, Ireland, and Scotland. And *for what* did they make these sacrifices? For the defence of their country and of the property in the country. Is it too much, then, to allow those who were called upon to make those great sacrifices to have a voice in choosing their representatives in Parliament? Is it *safe* to trust them with *arms* in their hands to defend the property of the country, and not *safe* to trust the sound of their voices in

the choosing of those who are to make laws affecting their own lives?

Thus, then, my Lord, we have not only law but reason to offer your Lordship in support of what we pray for; and, is it not right to answer us, before abusing us as if we were incendiaries and almost traitors? Besides, it is nothing new that we propose. The same was proposed by the late Duke of Richmond nearly forty years ago. And, so serious and so much in earnest was he upon the subject, that he actually brought a bill into Parliament to make a Reform upon the principles of *Annual Elections* and *Universal Suffrage*, of which Bill the following were the TITLE and PREAMBLE:—

“A BILL, ENTITLED,

“AN ACT for declaring and restoring the natural, inalienable and equal Right of ALL THE COMMONS of Great Britain (in fact, persons of insane mind, and criminals incapacitated by law, only excepted) TO VOTE IN the Election of their Representatives in Parliament: For regulating the manner of such Elections; For restoring ANNUAL PARLIAMENTS; For giving an hereditary Seat to the Sixteen Peers which shall be elected for Scotland: And, for establishing more equitable Regulations concerning the Peerage of Scotland.

“WHEREAS the LIFE, LIBERTY, AND PROPERTY, of every man is or may be affected by the law of the land in which he lives, and every man is bound to pay obedience to the same.

“AND WHEREAS, by the constitution of this kingdom, the RIGHT OF MAKING laws is vested in three estates, of King, Lords, and Commons, in Parliament assembled, and the consent of all the three said estates, comprehending the whole community, is necessary to make laws which bind the whole community.

“AND WHEREAS the House of Commons represents ALL THE COMMONS of the realm, and the consent of the House of Commons binds the consent of all the Commons of the realm, in all cases on which the legislature is competent to decide.

“AND WHEREAS NO MAN is, or can be actually represented who hath not a Vote in the election of his Representative.

“AND WHEREAS it is the RIGHT of EVERY COMMONER of this realm (in fact, persons of insane mind, and criminals incapacitated by law, only excepted) to have a vote in the election of the Representative who is to give his consent to the making of laws by which he is to be bound.

“AND WHEREAS the number of persons who are suffered to vote for electing the members of the House of Commons, do not at this time amount to one sixth part of the whole Commons of this realm, whereby far the greater part of the said Commons are deprived of their right to elect their Representatives; and the consent of the majority of the whole community to the passing of laws is given by persons whom they have not delegated for such purpose; and the majority of the said community are governed by laws made by a very small part of the said community and to which the said majority have not in fact consented by themselves, or by their Representatives.

“AND WHEREAS the state of election of members of the House of Commons, hath, in process of time, so grossly deviated from its simple and natural principle of representation and equality, that in several places the members are returned by the property of one man; that the smallest boroughs send as many members as the largest counties; and that a majority of the representatives of the whole nation are chosen by a number of voters not exceeding twelve thousand.

“NOW FOR REMEDY of such partial and unequal representation, and of the many mischiefs which have arisen therefrom; and for restoring, asserting, and maintaining the RIGHTS of THE COMMONS of this realm, be it declared and enacted, and it is hereby declared and enacted, by the King's most excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same: That every Commoner of this realm (excepting only infants, persons of insane mind, and criminals incapacitated by law), hath a natural, unalienable, and equal right to vote in the election of his Representative in Parliament.

“AND WHEREAS it was accorded by Statute in the fourth year of the Reign of King Edward the Third, that a Parliament should be holden every year or, and more often if need be; which statute was confirmed by another statute, passed in the 36th year of the reign of the said King Edward the Third; and the practice in ancient times was for writs to issue for the election of a new Parliament every year.

“AND WHEREAS FREQUENT ELECTIONS are indispensably necessary to enable the Commons to alter and amend the choice of their representatives as they may see occasion; and such elections ought to be as frequent as may be consistent with the use of a representative body; and the ancient practice of annual elections is well calculated for such purpose.

“AND WHEREAS triennial and septennial Parliaments, by rendering the exercise of the right of election less frequent, tend to

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make the Representatives less dependant on their Constituents, than they always ought to be; and also deprive the Commons for many years after they come of age, of their franchise of electing their own representatives; Be it declared and enacted by the authority aforesaid, That the ELECTION of members to serve in the House of Commons ought to be ANNUAL."

Now, my Lord, the late Duke of Richmond was a man of great talent, wisdom, and of uncommon industry, attention, and knowledge of the customs, manners and dispositions of the people of this country. He had been a soldier, a minister, a member of parliament; he was a Lord Lieutenant of a county; as a magistrate and a country gentleman, as a patron of the industrious and a friend of the distressed; in all these capacities and qualities he was surpassed by very few men that ever lived. This nobleman, whose death was the death of his neighbourhood, co-operated with that very MAJOR CARTWRIGHT, of whom your Lordship has spoken so justly, and against whose spotless reputation so many vipers are sending forth their venom. This nobleman, what was he? Was he an "evil minded and designing man?" Was he a deluder, or was he one of the "seduced?" Was he one of those "poor creatures," as the insolent PERRY calls the million of Petitioners for annual Parliaments and Universal Suffrage? The Duke of Richmond is of himself a great authority as to the law of the case, and what can be more full and clear than his Grace's Title and Preamble? Is it not, then, a little too much, my Lord, to treat all those, who now hold the same opinions, as being either "poor, ignorant, deceived creatures;" or as "designing and evil-minded men," who wish to stir up confusion and produce bloodshed? Did the Duke of Richmond wish to produce confusion and bloodshed? Did he desire to see revolution and destruction?

The Duke is himself a high authority; but, if your Lordship will be pleased to refer to the works of Mr. Granville Sharp, Mr. Baron Maseres, or to another work, lately published

by ALLMAN, Prince Street, Hanover-Square, entitled, "*Common Consent, the Basis of the Constitution of England; or Parliamentary Reform tried by the tests of Law and Reason*," your Lordship will find it proved, that the right of every freeman (that is to say, every man not a bondman) to vote for Members of Parliament, and the right to annual new parliaments, are birth-rights of Englishmen, however contemptuously the idea may be treated by Mr. PERRY, under the title of Speeches of Mr. BROUGHAM. The publications, here alluded to, that is to say, publications put forth by Mr. PERRY, purporting to be speeches recently delivered by Mr. BROUGHAM, and levelled immediately at LORD COCHRANE, have contained more bitter attacks on the Reformers than have come from any other quarter. This gentleman has been made to represent Annual Parliaments and Universal Suffrage as the wildest of nonsense; as "*little nostrums and big blunders*;" as mischievous in themselves, and as mischievously intended; as put forth by bad men, and sucked in by foolish men.

After this, my Lord, and after many direct personal attacks on Lord Cochrane, in the way above-mentioned, what has been the surprise in London, and what will it be all over the country, at hearing, that Mr. BROUGHAM himself, under his own hand writing, did most decidedly pledge himself to these very "*little nostrums and big blunders*!" But, let me clearly state to your Lordship the circumstances, under which this decided pledge was given.

About five or six years ago, Mr. BROUGHAM, in a paper which was printed, declared himself hostile to annual Parliaments and Universal Suffrage. But in the month of June, 1814, just at the time when Lord Cochrane was expected to be expelled from the House of Commons, and of course, when a vacancy for Westminster was expected to take place, there were certain individuals, who had formed the design of introducing Mr.

BROUGHAM to fill his Lordship's place. But there were other persons, who were resolved to oppose the attempt, unless Mr. BROUGHAM would explicitly declare for *annual parliaments* and for *suffrage co-extensive with taxation*; and one gentleman in particular, Mr. PLACE, of Charing Cross, wrote to the friends of Mr. Brougham this determination. Immediately upon this, there was a Meeting of the Livery of London, to which Mr. BROUGHAM was invited. At that Meeting he made a speech, which speech he, two days afterwards, wrote out in his own hand, which so written out in his own hand, was kept by some persons of the Westminster Committee, as the pledge of his principles, and which speech, which I have seen in Mr. Brougham's own hand-writing, was in the following words; to wit: "Mr. Brougham returned thanks, and said, that the last time he had met the Livery, two years ago, he had declined making professions or promises, because he saw them so often broken; but had desired the Livery, if it were worth their attention, to mark his conduct, and if it betrayed his declaration, to punish him next time they met by drinking to the memory of his departed principles:—that time was now come, and and he met them without any consciousness of having forfeited their favour. These two years had been pregnant with important events; and infinitely various as these were, they all agreed in this, that they had mightily redounded to the honour of the cause, and the confirmation of our principles. The fundamental maxim of liberty had been solemnly recognized in the face of the world, that all power is from the people; and that they have a right to choose their government, and dismiss their rulers for misconduct. They had done so in France, and it was a lesson that could not be forgotten in the rest of Europe. The saying that 'laws are silent in the midst of arms,' had failed for once; and this fundamental principle had triumphed over the triumphs

of the allied armies. So much for the honour of the cause. But the principles of Reform had been assisted also in their progress. Where is now the Gag, with which our mouths had for five-and-twenty years been stopped, as often as we have required that Parliaments should be chosen yearly, and that the elective franchise should be extended to all who pay taxes? We have been desired to wait, for the enemy was at the gate, and ready to avail himself of the discords attending our political contests, in order to undermine our national independence. This argument is gone, and our adversaries must now look for another.—He had mentioned the two radical doctrines of Yearly election, and the franchise enjoyed by all paying taxes; but it would be superfluous to reason in favour of them here, where all were agreed upon the subject,—However as elsewhere they may speedily be discussed, he should take leave to suggest a fact, for the use of such as might have occasion to defend their principles. It was one for the truth of which he might appeal to his honourable friend, the Member for Middlesex (Mr. BYNG,) who knew as well as he did, that there was a great improvement always observable in the conduct of the House of Commons, towards the last year of a Parliament; inasmuch, that he had heard it observed, that more good was done in that year, than in all the other five or six. The reason of all this he should not presume to state; but some persons were of so suspicious a nature, as to insinuate, that it might be the knowledge of the members, that at the end of that session they must meet their constituents, such of them as had any, and give an account of their trust. He avowed that this fact had been one of the chief grounds of his conviction of the expediency of yearly elections; and if any one thought this unsafe, he should answer, that such frequent recurrence and such exten-

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sion of the franchise as should ac-
company it, is the *best check upon*
profligate expense. If any other
check was wanting, it might be pro-
vided also. He had talked of such
Members as had constituents, being
reminded of it by the manner in
which the toast had been given out
by a mistake—he hoped not an omi-
nous one. It had been said, ‘a
full, fair, and free representation in
Parliament,’ leaving out ‘the Peo-
ple.’ Now this is just what is done
elsewhere. There is ‘a full, fair,
and free representation in Parlia-
ment’—we need not drink to that.
There is a full representation of the
Aristocracy—a fair representation
of the *Landed Interest*—a free re-
presentation—a free ingress of the
Court,—but not much representa-
tion of the People—they are left
out, as they were to-day. It must,
however, be otherwise soon. While
they bear the burdens of the state,
they must, as of right, share in its
government; and to effect this
Reform, all good men must now
unite. He lamented the absence of
his friends now detained elsewhere;
but he knew they would come, the
moment their duty permitted.
Messrs. Whitbread, Brand, Creevey,
Bennet, Grattan, Lord Ossulston,
Lord A. Hamilton, he knew, were
most anxious to join the meeting.
What they were now about he could
not precisely say; but he guessed
they were not supporting the Court
at that particular moment.”

Strange, my Lord, is it not? And
is it not a pity, that this gentleman
should have been exhibited to the
world by his friend, Mr. PERRY, as
calling annual parliaments and uni-
versal suffrage “little nostrums and
big blunders?”

But, I have not yet finished the his-
tory of the Westminster Seat Scheme.
That Scheme was put aside in 1814,
by that sense of justice and that high
sentiment, which led the people of
Westminster to re-elect Lord Cochrane
though he had been expelled by the
House of Commons, and the good
effects of that re-election they and

the whole country now feel. But
though frustrated for this time, the con-
nection was carefully kept up with
some persons in Westminster; and,
at a meeting in Palace-Yard, about a
year ago, upon the subject of the
Property Tax, a regular plan was laid,
in concert with himself, for introduc-
ing Mr. Brougham to the people of that
city. He was so introduced; but, it
falling to the lot of Mr. HUNT to
speak before the part of Mr. Brough-
am came to be performed, the former
gentleman so prepared the way for the
latter, that he thought it prudent to
withdraw, and magnanimously to
forego the sort of applause which
awaited his debut. Mr. Brougham,
upon being afterwards reminded of
this sudden retreat by Lord Castle-
reagh, said that he did not intend to
speak at the Meeting, he not being an
inhabitant of Westminster. I have it
not under his own hand, indeed, that
he did intend to speak at the meeting;
but a gentleman, on whose word I can
rely, assures me, that Mr. Brougham,
(though not an inhabitant of West-
minster,) did attend at a previous se-
lect meeting where the Resolutions
were prepared, and that it was at that
meeting settled that he should speak
upon one of the resolutions.

Frightened away from his game
here, the gentleman does not seem,
however, to have wholly abandoned
the chase; for, at a dinner, on the
23d of May last, at the Crown and
Anchor Tavern, at which dinner I was,
the name of Mr. Brougham was in-
serted in the *List of Toasts* immedi-
ately after the names of the two mem-
bers for the City. I, seeing this name
so placed, and finding Major Cart-
wright's name at nearly the bottom of
the list, intimated to the Stewards,
that, unless Major Cartwright's name
was placed before that of Mr.
Brougham, I would oppose the toast;
and that this alteration was made ac-
cordingly. Nor did I stop here, for
I read to the company at dinner a
paper, the purport of which was, that
in a vacancy in Westminster should hap-
pen, Major Cartwright, and no other
man, ought to be the person to fill it,

and one of the *objects* of which paper was well known to be, to guard the City against the schemes and intrigues which had long been going on in favor of Mr. Brougham. At this dinner, and coming with views similar to my own, was Mr. HUNT; and, one of the Committee told that gentleman and me, that though Mr. Brougham had *by letter*, said that he would be at the dinner, he had left word, that if Mr. HUNT came, information should be sent to him of it. We were also told, that such information had been sent to Mr. Brougham; and, in about half an hour afterwards, came an *apology* from Mr. Brougham, saying that he could not attend on account of his duty in the House of Commons, a motion of Sir Samuel Romilly's being just about to come on!

I will leave your Lordship to judge in what degree these transactions may have given rise to those bitter reproaches, which have been cast on the "*little nostrums and big blunders*" of the "*designing and evil-minded*" leaders of the "*poor, deluded, duped creatures of Reformers*;" and also, in what degree these transactions may have tended to draw forth the imputations cast on the "*prompters*" and "*abettors*" of Lord Cochrane. But, I must beg your Lordship well to note the fact, that, in May last, Mr. Brougham's hopes as to Westminster were *completely destroyed*; and, I will leave your Lordship to judge if you can, as to the *precise time* when the mind of this gentleman returned to its *old state* of dislike to annual parliaments and universal suffrage.

Your Lordship knows, that the above-inserted manuscript speech of Mr. Brougham, was read in the House of Commons by Lord Cochrane on Monday last; and his Lordship did this as he does every thing, in an open and manly manner, and also with great ability and effect. The answer of Mr. Brougham has been published by Mr. PERRY, in these words: "It had often been observed, and indeed with great justice, that there was not perhaps, a more *painful and irksome situation*, than

that where a man was obliged to *speak of himself*. In proportion to that painful situation, and in compassion to it, the indulgence of the House had always been extended, and he hoped it would be so on the present occasion [hear, hear! from all sides of the House.] He trusted it would not, however, be thought that he was courting anxiously an opportunity of going into detail, or that on the contrary he wished to avoid such details, for he felt it his duty to say, that he expressed his warmest thanks to the Noble Lord for the frank and open manner in which he had afforded him the opportunity of going into the subject. A more groundless aspersion had, he believed, never been brought forward against any individual. He did not accuse the Noble Lord, however, or those out of doors, who had put the *brief* into his hands, of uttering any falsehood in the statement of which had just been submitted to the House, but he decidedly accused them of rashness and imprudence, and of not waiting for only a few days longer, when they would have had a full and fair opportunity of hearing his opinions on this most momentous and important subject, and then they would have found whether he was or was not inconsistent. [Hear, hear, hear!] Had those out of doors, whose tool the Noble Lord was, but waited those few days, they would then have known what his real sentiments on the question were, having, as the House well knew, reserved to himself the right of then speaking what he felt on the subject [hear, hear]. How then could the Noble Lord, how could they whose hands he is, presume to know what were the opinions he (Mr. B.) had formed on this most interesting question? How do they know that he would not have stated his opinion then in the very terms which had just been read? That they should have ascertained his sentiments was a moral impossibility [hear, hear!] But the Noble Lord

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“ had given a mis-statement of what
“ took place, and he should now en-
“ deavour to give the House the par-
“ ticulars of the case. A dinner was
“ given at the London Tavern to the
“ friends of Parliamentary Reform,
“ at which he (Mr. B.) attended, with
“ his friend the Member for Middle-
“ sex, with the late truly respected
“ and much lamented Member for
“ the town of Bedford (Mr. Whit-
“ bread), with the Member for Hert-
“ fordshire (Mr. Brand), and the
“ Member for Shrewsbury (Mr. Ben-
“ net.) In the course of what passed
“ there, some observations fell from
“ him *similar* to what had been read
“ by the Noble Lord. The chief mo-
“ tive he had in correcting what he
“ had there stated, was to prevent the
“ possibility of his words on this dan-
“ gerous and yet important question
“ being misrepresented. He then
“ said, *or at least meant to be under-*
“ *stood as saying*, what he still main-
“ tained, that it was consonant to the
“ genius and spirit of the Constitu-
“ tion, and expedient in every sense
“ of the word, that the *power of elec-*
“ *tion should be limited to those who*
“ *paid direct taxes*. He corrected
“ what he had said on the subject, as
“ he was aware of the mistakes of re-
“ porters. He again repeated, and
“ wished it to be understood, that
“ what he then said the same he now
“ maintained, viz. *that the payment*
“ *of direct taxes* ought to be the li-
“ mit of the elective franchise. He
“ did not wish to compete with the
“ Noble Lord, but this was his mean-
“ ing when he so spoke. He should
“ wish to say one word upon what
“ had been said respecting his advo-
“ cating the cause of a moderate and
“ gradual Reform. Six years ago it
“ would be remembered he had re-
“ peatedly said, both within and
“ without the House, that it would
“ be proper for those who wished for
“ *Annual Parliaments* to unite with
“ those who were *more moderate*, and
“ and thus *secure a footing*. There
“ was no reason for their stopping
“ short, and he did not hold it to be
“ inconsistent in the friends of An-
“ nual Parliaments to unite with the
“ more moderate Reformers, and to

“ obtain, *in the first instance, a be-*
“ *ginning*. This was the opinion he
“ then held, and he had never de-
“ viated from it. The Noble Lord
“ was much mistaken when he sup-
“ posed that the mere production of
“ a speech delivered by him (Mr.
“ B.) at a Tavern, would make him
“ swerve from the line of duty merely
“ from the foolish and childish de-
“ sire of keeping up an appearance
“ of consistency. If he supposed
“ him (Mr. B.) to do so, he was
“ much mistaken. The House had
“ heard him declare his intention to
“ reserve his right of being heard,
“ when the question was brought
“ fully under the consideration of the
“ House, and he could only add, that
“ he would still reserve to himself that
“ right, uninfluenced by any thing the
“ Noble Lord had said. He again re-
“ peated, that when he spoke of the
“ extension of suffrage, it should be
“ to those who paid direct taxes only,
“ for he never *dreamt* of it going fur-
“ ther. As to the *miserable motives*
“ alleged to have actuated him as if
“ he could prostitute himself at one
“ time to deliver opinions which were
“ not the sentiments of his heart, for
“ the purpose of being carried into the
“ House *on the shoulders of a rabble*,
“ [hear, hear!] and at another time
“ to bend to prejudices he might have
“ to contend with in the House, all he
“ should say was, that he treated
“ such charges with *the contempt they*
“ *deserved*. The only pain he felt,
“ was when he contemplated the *folly*
“ and the *madness* of some *wild theo-*
“ *rists* and the *base expedients* and
“ false practices they made use of to
“ *divide the people from the Constitu-*
“ *tion* merely to gratify party purposes
“ and to compass objects in which *the*
“ *good of the Country* was neglected,
“ while the *interests of one or two indi-*
“ *viduals* was the *all in all*. [Hear,
“ hear, hear!]. This gave him more
“ pain than all the Noble Lord had
“ said or could say [hear].

There needs little comment. The
calling of Lord Cochrane “ a tool” in
the hands of others; the calling the
paper a “ groundless aspersion;” the
“ warmest thanks” to his Lordship
for bringing forward such aspersion;

the "*contempt*" expressed at the imputation of the "*miserable motive*" for making the pledge; the *disdain* expressed at the idea of a desire to be "*carried to the House on the shoulders of a RABBLE*;" the assertion about the *folly* and *madness* of some *wild* theorists, who were making use of *base expedients* and *false practices* to divide the people from the Constitution for the mere *private interests* of one or two individuals: All these, my Lord, shall pass for what they are worth; and, I fancy, the full value of them will be found in the *pity* of a nation, naturally good-natured, and never prone to triumph over a fallen adversary.

But, as to the two great points; *Annual Parliaments* and *Universal Suffrage*, what explanation is here given? Why, as to the first, as to annual parliaments *no explanation at all*. Indeed, it was utterly impossible. Ingenuity equal to that of Lord Peter in the Tale of a Tub could not have got rid of that point. And, what is *suffrage co-extensive with taxation*; what is that short of universal suffrage, when *every human creature in the country* pays heavy taxes? Oh! says Mr. Brougham, but I *meant* "direct Taxes." *Meant!* Why did you not *say* so then? *Meant!* You meant what you *said*, to be sure; and so it was understood unquestionably. Besides, my Lord, be pleased to consider the *occasion* of writing this famous paper. It was the gentleman's *creed*; it was his political confession of faith. Lawyers are not apt to be careless in their use of words; they are not very much in the habit of leaving their meaning dubious from a desire to abbreviate. And, upon an occasion like the one here mentioned, was it likely that the gentleman would deliberately, after two days of reflection, put upon paper *that which he did not mean*? Yet it is not of the *change of opinion*, though under such *peculiar circumstances*, that any reasonable man will find fault; it is, as Lord Cochrane truly said, the *attacks* on those who *now* entertain the same opinions; the charges of *wildness*, *madness*, *mischievousness*, of *evil designs* and *base motives*, preferred against those persons, and the abuse

heaped upon them (in the *Chronicle Speeches*), under the name of Mr. Brougham, day after day. This was too much for flesh and blood to bear, and the noble Lord had resented it in a most able, manly and effectual manner. "*A few days!*" The gentlemen, who held the pledge, were to wait *a few days*, till Mr. Brougham should declare his sentiments? *What* sentiments? He had declared, that those who proposed *Annual Parliaments* and *Universal Suffrage*, were *deluders*, and those who listened to them were *deluded*; he had called these propositions, "*little nostrums* and *big blunders*;" he had spoken of the promoters of the petitions as *wild*, *mad*, *mischievous* men. Was not this a pretty full declaration of his sentiments? What more were the holders of the pledge to wait for?

I am not sorry to perceive, however, that the learned gentleman received, in the hour of his altered tone, the kind condolence of his friends. Mr. BRAND is reported to have said, "that his learned friend had *vindicated*—he ought rather to say *he had completely repelled* the *un-* *called* for and *undeserved* attack that *had been levelled* at him."—Mr. LITTLETON went still further, as appears from the report; for he "*not only* *thought* that his learned friend had *completely vindicated* himself, but *said* that he (Mr. Littleton) was *quite ready to share* in any *odium* *that might attach* to his honourable *and learned friend* for his conduct *on this important question*." Upon which I can only say, my Lord, that I envy the gentleman his generosity rather than his taste.

Now then, my Lord, what is the sum and substance of all that I have, to your great fatigue, I am afraid, submitted to the consideration of your Lordship? Why, it is this: that there are both *law* and *reason* on the side of *Annual Parliaments* and *Universal Suffrage*; that this plan of reform has actually been, within these forty years, brought before parliament, in the shape of a Bill, by one of the first peers of the realm; and that those who have been the most harsh in their censure of the present

Reformers; were, a very little while ago, the most decided advocates for this very plan of reform.

We contend, that we are right. We may, nevertheless, be wrong; but we want fact and argument to convince us of our errors, and shall never be convinced by *abuse*. We shall never be convinced by the Sinecure Placemen, who write in the Quarterly Review, and who actually propose the silencing of us by *force*. In short, my Lord, they use these infamous words: "The press may combat the press in ordinary times and upon ordinary topics; a measure of finance, for instance, or the common course of politics, or a point of *theology*. But in seasons of *great agitation*, on those momentous subjects in which the peace and security of society, nay the very existence of social order itself is involved, it is absurd to suppose, that the healing will come from the same weapon as the wound." Then, after saying that the people receive my Journal "with entire faith; that it serves them for law and for gospel, for their creed and their ten commandments; that they talk by it and swear by it; that they are ready to live by it, and to die by it." After this, these writers propose, that it should be *put down by force of law*, and they must mean *new law* too.

Can your Lordship form an idea of any thing more foul, more base than this? If the people do swear by my little book, they must, I hope, be in the right way; for never did any man more sedulously propagate precepts of peace, harmony, patience, fortitude, and obedience to the laws. I do feel proud, I must feel proud, at the wonderful extent of my writings; but I feel much more proud in the reflection, that those writings, without appealing to the low passions of men, but relying for success on the force of truth and reason, have greatly tended to enlighten the understandings of the people, and thereby to prevent those violences which have always heretofore, in this country and in all other countries, been the inseparable companions of great national misery. Your Lordship has

truly observed, that the conduct of the people is meritorious beyond all example. Indeed, the spectacle of probably *four millions* of people having, at different places, met in large bodies to petition on the subject of grievances, without a single riot or act of violence, is one of the most grand as well as most affecting, that ever presented itself to the mind of man; and, it is so honourable to our national character, that we must hate and abhor the wretch, who calls himself an Englishman, and who can see it without delight. Yet, these Sinecure Placemen of the Quarterly Review, would have an *imprimatur*, a prohibition, enacted against the writings, which, above all others, have contributed towards the producing of this most admirable effect.

Your Lordship has heard enough about the Libellous Bill posted up against Mr. HUNT; you have read also of a placard, posted up to excite riot at the last Spa-fields Meeting, and from the examinations before the Lord Mayor, you have seen that placard traced to its *source*. I could prove, that a posting bill against *me* was issued out, in the hands of five bill-stickers, from the Courier Office, to be stuck up in the *dead of night*, and that some of these people, having been taken into custody by the watch, were released by the Constable of the night upon their telling him *who were their employers*. What can your Lordship, what can any honourable man, think of these transactions?

Is it my Lord, *inflammatory* matter that I have here been doing myself the honour of addressing your Lordship? Yet of this very stamp have all my writings been for many years past. The subjects that I treat of, and of which to treat is my taste and my delight, are all of a nature to produce thinking, and to call forth the reasoning faculties of the mind. How much have we heard of plans, and how many hundreds of thousands of pounds have we seen expended, in order to *enlighten* the people! And, if this be really the object of the promoters of those plans, what praise is not due from them to me, who am endeavouring to communicate to the people at large all

that I have acquired from a life of application and experience; who am, in short, endeavouring to take one head, full of useful knowledge, and to clap it safe and sound upon every pair of shoulders in the kingdom?

"The race that write," are, my Lord, but too generally speaking, full of *envy*. The partiality of mothers for their children is a trifling weakness, compared to that of authors for their works; and, in both cases, the partiality is usually strong in proportion to the worthlessness of its object; because parental fondness steps forward as a compensation for the neglect or contempt or hatred of the world. But, unhappy authors, not content with blindly doating on their own unsuccessful progeny, always endeavour to avenge their disappointments and shame on those of a different description. This is the case, at this moment, with the Quarterly Reviewers, and with many, many others! They would tear me to pieces for writing; they would tear the people to pieces for reading; they would chop off my hand, and pluck out the people's eyes: and, this, or something very near to this, they, or somebody else, must do, before I shall cease to write, or the people cease to read.

This very moment a Second Edition of the *Courier* comes kindly to inform me, that the *Green Bag* has brought forth, amongst other things, a report relative to "the publication of inflammatory and seditious works at a CHEAP rate, the end and intention of which is to root out all feelings of religion and morality, and to excite a hatred and contempt for the EXCITING STATE OF THINGS." Ah, ah! Say you so! Well! But are there not plenty of laws already for the punishment of seditious writings, and also of impious and immoral writings? Oh, yes! My work cannot be meant, then! Yet there is that ugly word CHEAP! Why, in the name of goodness, dislike cheap publications? I thought that all the kind, all the benevolent, all the religious, all the moral, all the philanthropic, all the good, dear Bible and Religious Tract Societies, were endeavouring, by all the means in their power, to send forth CHEAP publications. What! It surely cannot be an objection to a publication, that it is CHEAP! How are the people to get at reading, if they cannot have it CHEAP? These CHEAP publications do, it seems, according to the *Courier's* account of the *Green Bag*, tend to excite a hatred and contempt

for the EXISTING STATE OF THINGS. This is a very large phrase. If it had said for the king, for the parliament, for the Lords, for the Church, for the Laws, there would have been a clear meaning; but, the existing state of things may mean Sinecures, Pensions, Grants, Standing Army, a certain mode of getting Seats, it may mean the Pauperism and Misery that now over-read this formerly happy country. However, my Lord, if a Law were to be passed against CHEAP publications, I can assure your Lordship, that no general classification would hide the real object. All the people in England would understand most clearly what was meant. But, my Lord, nothing short of a TOTAL BREAKING UP OF THE PRESS could sever the people of England from my writings. If a law were passed to make my writings of high price, the people would club their *turnpences* to get at them, and they would value them the more, and seek them with more avidity, on account of what they could not but regard as a prohibition. Whether any attempt of the sort will be made is more than I can say; but, of one thing I am very sure, that nothing short of a direct *Imprimatur*; nothing short of a Censorship; that is to say, nothing short of the Government having the power to examine works before they be printed, and to forbid their being printed if it chooses; nothing short of this, will, can, or shall keep my writings from the eyes of my suffering countrymen. More than a MILLION of my little books have been sold within the last six months; and, though the people are tormented with the gnawings of starvation; though this is acknowledged and proclaimed in parliament as well as out, not one riot, not a single breach of the peace, has occurred at any of those numerous and multitudinous assemblages, where the principles of my little book have been held forth and acted on.—Hundreds of Gentlemen are ready to attest, that it is their firm belief, that the exemplary patience and fortitude of the people and the consequent peace of the country are to be, in a great degree, ascribed to the influence of this little book; and, yet, in the face of all this—but, it is useless to talk; nothing short of an *Imprimatur* will, can, or shall keep any writings from the eyes of my suffering and faithful countrymen, who will, I have no doubt, in many places, send up petitions in time against any such measure.

In the full conviction, that your Lordship will hold in abhorrence all these attempts at foul play, and in the anxious hope, that you will do me the honour to lend your patient attention to what I have here written,

I am, with the greatest respect,

Your Lordship's most obedient servant,

WM. COBBETT.

P.S. I intended to have offered some remarks upon the fine instances of the People's conduct at their public meetings in several parts of the kingdom, especially at Worcester, Birmingham and Carlisle. But, want of room compels me to postpone these till my next, as well as the correction of an error as to the cause of the disturbances in Wales.

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